



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

The Episcopal Church Center • 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017
(212) 922-5385 • (800) 334-7626 • FAX (212) 557-5827 • jsolheim@dfms.org / kmccormick@dfms.org

Office of News and Information

James E. Solheim, Director

Kathryn McCormick, Associate Director

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**For immediate release:
CONTENTS**

■	Kosovo refugees in U.S. begin meeting their new communities (99-072)	1
■	Presiding Bishop criticizes Clinton diplomacy in wake of NATO attack on Chinese (99-070)	3
■	Anglicans and Roman Catholics release statement on Authority (99-073)	4
■	Workshop on Unity draws over 400 ecumenists from several traditions (99-074)	6
■	Lutherans choosing sides as vote nears on full communion with Episcopalians (99-075)	8
■	Traditionalists raise the stakes by challenging authority of diocesan bishops (99-076)	10
■	Global Mission Network looks ahead to challenges of next millennium (99-077)	12
■	Mother of murdered gay student urges passage of hate crimes bill (99-078)	14
■	NEWS DIGEST	16
	NEWSBRIEFS (99-079)	25

NEWSFEATURES

- **Killings trigger new kind of gunfight in Utah (99-080)** 31
- **California Forum explores issue of blessing same-sex unions (99-081)** 32
- **Salvadoran rescued from deportation returns to joyous wedding in North Carolina (99-082)** 35
- **Update from the Presiding Bishop on the ongoing crisis in Kosovo (99-071)** 37

99-072

Kosovo refugees in U.S. begin meeting their new communities

by James Solheim and Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) The Kosovo refugees who arrived at Ft. Dix in New Jersey recently have undergone batteries of medical and background checks and they have received a short introduction to American life. Three families have taken the next giant step into their new lives: They left Ft. Dix for new homes in Sarasota, Florida; Boise, Idaho; and Seattle.

Since then, other families have also traveled to new homes as the refugees' welcome to the U.S. begins its next phase, actual resettlement in American communities.

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), one of 10 agencies working with the U.S. government in the resettlement process, is playing a key role, said its director Richard Parkins, noting that two of the first three families to leave Ft. Dix were placed in new homes through EMM affiliates in the Diocese of Idaho and the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

These families, like most of the families at Ft. Dix, are "free" cases, meaning that they do not have relatives living in the U.S., he said. EMM already has reunited families in Waterbury, Connecticut; Austin, Texas; Detroit, and Miami.

Settling in Detroit

"Things are swinging," Sandra Richardson, a diocesan-based affiliate of EMM in Detroit, reported in a recent e-mail to Migration Ministries' office in New York. Richardson, an Episcopal priest, went on to report that her network was preparing to receive a number of Albanian families.

The Ford Motor Company has offered warehouse space for donations of new furniture for the families; a furniture company already has said it will provide 200 mattresses, bed springs and bed frames, plus tables and chairs, she said. The families will be given vouchers to shop at the warehouse. A local school has collected clothing and food, she noted, and people are donating gift certificates to be used in local stores.

Richardson also said that volunteers have come forward to help with the coordination of sponsors, families, community groups and agencies and school, work and housing arrangements.

"People want to be involved now," she said, adding that many volunteers had not known before that the Episcopal Church is involved in refugee work.

Parkins said that while the work is hard, EMM has been able to rely on years of experience to quickly find and assess sites for resettlement—places that have a workable combination of good housing, jobs that can support families, and communities that share the refugees' culture. For the Kosovo refugees, an Islamic support system will be very important, he said.

"We have studied this through the years," he said, "and EMM is not unmindful that we're not the only kids on the block doing this. We work with other agencies, such as the U.S. Catholic Conference, to do the best we can for each family." Together, the agencies will resettle an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 refugees this year, plus the 20,000 Kosovars that are to be brought to the U.S., he said.

At the moment, he added, his office and its 38 affiliates across the country are "certainly working flat-out to respond to the Kosovo crisis."

He marveled at the support that the resettlement effort has received from the church and from communities. "I'm under no illusion that we're doing this alone," he said. "This is a partnership of agencies, of the government and of many people across the church." (*See Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold's own recent update on the church's response to the Kosovo crisis in NewsFeatures.*)

Part of that support is coming specifically from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, which has sent \$120,000 to Action by Churches Together (ACT), a relief organization working in the refugee camps in countries adjacent to Kosovo.

The fund also plans to contribute to the resettlement effort in the U.S., said Sandra Swan, director of the fund, who added that the response by people in the church to the Kosovars' plight continues to be strong.

Hillary Clinton reports on trip

First Lady Hillary Clinton publicly thanked churches and other non-governmental agencies for their relief work in the Balkans, especially their "commitment, compassion and resources" in meeting the needs of the refugees pouring out of Kosovo. "Their stories must be told—and never forgotten," she said at a press briefing in Washington May 18, shortly after she returned from a visit to refugees in Macedonia. She also met some of the first refugees to be brought to the United States at Ft. Dix, New Jersey, admitting that she found it difficult to listen to their stories. Referring to media coverage of their plight, Clinton said that those "haunting images remind us of what's at stake."

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX), who accompanied Clinton and other Congressional leaders on the visit to six countries in the area, said that church agencies like Catholic Relief Services are doing "a superb job." In one camp she found Muslim refugees being helped by Roman Catholics assisted by Israeli Jews. "This is the very best in us—coming together to help people in crisis." She said that she found it appropriate for the United States, a nation of immigrants, to reach out and help other immigrants.

Although he found the trip "emotionally draining," Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) said that the delegation made it clear to the refugees that "one day you will be able to go back and reestablish your lives." He added that it is "critically important for the United States, as the leading world power," to stop oppression and brutality.

The church agencies represent "the compassionate hands of the American people," said Ken Hackett of Catholic Relief Services. "We are facing an exceptionally difficult reality," he said, and a race to resolve the situation before winter sets in.

In an interview, Julia Taft of the State Department, who was part of the delegation, said that the logistical problems are immense. There are too many refugees on the Albanian border, for example, and the water and sanitation problems in the camps are very serious. Yet she said that "the lucky ones" got out of Kosovo, leaving hundreds of thousands still trapped in the province without any support.

She shared concern about resettlement before winter but said that relief agencies are doing everything they can to move people to host families so they are not trapped in the camps. The United States will subsidize host families in Albania in an effort to relieve economic pressures. While the struggle for a political settlement continues, Taft is deeply concerned that "nobody has a good picture" of what is happening in Kosovo itself. "When we get in we may see killing fields," she said.

--James Solheim is director and Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

99-070

Presiding Bishop criticizes Clinton diplomacy in wake of NATO attack on Chinese embassy

(ENS) Expressing frustration at the Clinton administration's response to China's outrage at the NATO bombing of its embassy in Belgrade, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold has urged the president to consider sending the secretary of State to Beijing on "a mission of healing and reconciliation" to help mend frayed U.S.-China relations.

"It is my strong sense that, while apologies were made, qualifiers and linkages to other issues served only to further worsen the situation, showing disrespect to the Chinese people at the time of this tragedy," Griswold said, adding later, "I hope such failures on the human level can be avoided in the future."

Griswold sent a copy of the letter to Han Wenzao, president of the China Christian Council.

In addition, the presiding bishop had a wreath sent to the offices of the Chinese Mission to the United Nations with a note offering the Episcopal Church's "collective condolences to China for the deplorable bombing of your embassy in Belgrade, especially to the families of the victims."

Shortly after making the text of the letter public, Griswold issued an update on the Episcopal Church's activities in response to the Kosovo crisis (see separate text in News Features.)

The bombing, part of the long NATO air campaign across Yugoslavia, killed three journalists and heavily damaged the embassy building.

"I have publicly noted earlier my support of efforts to end the suffering of the Albanian Kosovars, and my complete abhorrence of Mr. Milosevic's policies and action," Griswold said. "However, the bombing of the Chinese embassy clearly shows the shortcomings of the air war." The presiding bishop reaffirmed his support for diplomatic efforts to end to the Balkan conflict.

The text of the presiding bishop's letter:

May 13, 1999
The President of the United States
The White House
Washington DC

Dear Mr. President:

NATO's bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade is lamentable enough, but the response of our country to China has compounded the offense. It is my strong sense that, while apologies were made, qualifiers and linkages to other issues served only to further worsen the situation, showing disrespect to the Chinese people at the time of this tragedy. Such a horrible event, the responsibility from which the U.S. cannot retreat, must be met with unqualified regret. My sense from on the ground in China is that this incident has been a crushing blow to the people of China, who look to the U.S. with both admiration and

suspicion. I share your commitment to a long-term harmonious relationship with the people of China. I hope such failures on the human level can be avoided in the future.

I urge you to consider sending the Secretary of State to Beijing on a mission of healing and reconciliation. If appropriate and welcome, perhaps the Secretary of State could meet with the families of the victims who died to extend your personal condolences.

Mr. President, I have publicly noted earlier my support of efforts to end the suffering of the Albanian Kosovars, and my complete abhorrence of Mr. Milosevic's policies and actions. However, the bombing of the Chinese embassy clearly shows the shortcomings of the air war. Every day we add to the suffering of all the people in the region.

Please know of my continuing support of your efforts to seek every diplomatic opportunity to end the conflict, including involvement of Russia and China in that process, and placing this matter under the aegis of the United Nations. In this regard I urge you to vigorously pursue opportunities for a diplomatic solution to the current crisis, fully embracing the good offices of the Secretary General of the United Nations. I also request that you explore and consider any opportunities for mediation which may be available through intermediary governments or other recognized structures dedicated to maintaining international peace and security.

With the assurances of my support for your good office and prayers for you personally as you discharge the awesome duties of your office, I am,

Yours sincerely,
Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop

XC: Dr. Han Wenzao, China Christian Council

99-073

Anglicans and Roman Catholics release statement on Authority

by James Solheim

(ENS) After five years of careful dialogue, the co-chairs of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on (ARCIC) May 12 released the text of "The Gift of Authority" at a news conference in London's Westminster Abbey.

The new statement emerges from a series of dialogues that began with a 1966 visit of Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI at the Vatican. They have produced a number of statements on the Eucharist, Ministry and Ordination, and now Authority in the Church. "The Gift of Authority" is the fourth statement from the second phase of ARCIC's work.

Authority, particularly the authority of the Bishop of Rome, has been "a key element in the division that occurred at the time of the English Reformation," said the Church of England's Bishop Mark Santer of Birmingham, and Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Catholic bishop of Arundel and Brighton, at the press conference.

"For four centuries the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church developed their structures of authority in separation from each other, and Anglicans lived without the ministry of the Bishop of Rome," they said.

A Final Report issued in 1981 at the end of the first round of dialogues revealed broad agreement on how authority operates in the church, the role of bishops, and even about the significance of the papal office in "a reunited Church and the place his ministry has in God's providential plan for his Church." Yet the report also revealed "some serious issues had still to be resolved." Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey and Pope John Paul II agreed in 1996 that "we shall not reach the full visible unity to which we are both committed" without an agreement on authority.

A call for careful study

"It is a closely argued, rich text, with every sentence important in leading towards its conclusion," the bishops said in their background statement. "It therefore will need careful study and reflection in our two Communion."

Stressing the understanding of authority as "God's gift to be received gratefully," they drew upon a Scriptural image from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians that suggests authority serves the church in its attempt to remember the "yes" God has given to the world in Jesus Christ, enabling church members "to respond with a faithful 'amen' as they walk Christ's way."

The statement outlines how authority is exercised at various levels in the life of the church, "including how the whole people of God bears the Tradition across space and time, and the particular role bishops have in discerning and articulating this faith of the Church and ensuring that all the Churches are in communion."

The statement agrees about the role of the Bishop of Rome "within the college of bishops concerning the discernment of truth," making it clear that in certain circumstances he has "a duty to discern and make explicit, in fidelity to Scripture and Tradition, the authentic faith of the whole Church, that is the faith of all the baptized in communion." ARCIC said that it believes that "this is a gift to be received by all the Churches and is entailed in the recognition of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome."

Issues facing Anglicans

In the final section, the statement addressed one of the most contentious issues at last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops—the interdependence among the provinces of the Anglican Communion. "Is the Communion also open to the acceptance of instruments of oversight which would allow decisions to be reached that, in certain circumstances, would bind the whole Church?... To what extent does unilateral action by provinces or dioceses in matters concerning the whole Church, even after consultation has taken place, weaken koinonia?" the statement asked.

While underscoring a willingness among Anglicans to "tolerate anomalies for the sake of maintaining communion," the statement said that there was a price to pay in an "impairment of communion."

Issue at heart of relationship

In a covering memo to the Episcopal Church's bishops and ecumenical participants, the Rev. David Perry said that the topic of authority may sound esoteric but he stressed its importance for the life of the whole church. "We are talking about how decisions are made in the church—by whom and with what effect," said the church's ecumenical officer. "The issue goes to the heart of all our relationships, not only within our own church but in our relationship with ecumenical partners. And how we view authority is related to almost every other issue in our life together."

Perry hopes that local Roman Catholic and Episcopal dioceses will "take the time to carefully study the document." And he said that the dialogue between the two churches in this country (ARC-USA) will be "enriched" by the statement.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold said in a sermon at the March meeting of ARC-USA that such statements "are signs of the unwavering commitment of our two communities to resolve all that impedes our full and open recognition of the communion we share in the risen Christ."

In the continuing journey toward unity, Griswold, who is the newly appointed co-chair of ARCIC, expressed a hope that "we are so ready to have our vision expanded, our hearts broken open, and our tendency to try and fit God's truth to our own, undermined and overturned."

The presiding bishop called the statement on authority "another important step forward in the long and arduous journey toward the establishment of full visible communion..." one that "challenges Anglicans and Roman Catholics to think in fresh ways" about how authority can serve in the "reconciliation of all things in Christ."

(The text is available on the Websites for both churches:

www.anglicancommunion.org and www.nccbuscc.org, and in printed version from the Episcopal Book and Resource Center in New York (tel. 800-334-7626, ext. 6118).

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

99-074

Workshop on Unity draws over 400 ecumenists from several traditions

by James Solheim

(ENS) Drawn by a common commitment to the search for Christian unity, about 400 representatives of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches met in Rochester, New York, in May to celebrate recent advances, discuss continuing barriers to unity—and to dream about the future.

"Without love at the center, the ecumenical journey will flounder and collapse and our carefully wrought compacts and agreements will be lifeless," warned Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold at the opening plenary of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO), one of the denominational organizations that meet as part of the Workshop for Christian Unity.

"The division and distress of our world—to which communities of faith have so sadly contributed—and God's passionate desire to reconcile and make all things new, call us to repentance: to yield our several certainties and allow ourselves to be pulled out of our ecclesial securities, by the power and urgency of God's deathless and recreative and reordering love."

A complicated ecumenical agenda

Several speakers addressed both the recent successes and continuing frustrations in the ecumenical agenda. Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church USA urged participants to push through the barriers because unity among the churches will help them address a wide range of issues in a broken world.

"We live in a difficult ecumenical era," he said, but "the dreams are no less valued and important." He saw many signs of hope, citing progress on the Consultation on Church Union, which is bringing together nine different churches. Churches of the Reformed tradition, including the Presbyterians, have recently established a relationship of full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

The struggle for a similar relationship between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church stalled when the Lutherans failed by six votes to adopt a Concordat of Agreement at their 1997 Churchwide Assembly. They will vote again next summer on a rewritten proposal, "Called to Common Mission" (CCM), but opposition is well organized, centered on aversion requirement that the Lutherans adopt the historic episcopate.

"We are asking to be reincorporated into the historic episcopate, which most of Christendom has," Prof. Donald Armentrout, an ELCA pastor who teaches at the Episcopal seminary in Sewanee, told Lutheran and Episcopal ecumenical officers. "The ELCA is being asked to adopt a sign of apostolicity that is not necessary but may help us in our mission to the world."

Bishop William Burrill of the Diocese of Rochester called the continuing divisions among Christians "obscene," arguing that Lutherans and Episcopalians should be uncomfortable with the obscenity of a divided church. "We have got to help our people hear the Gospel," he said.

Ecumenical winter?

The Rev. William Rusch, an ELCA pastor who is director of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches, argued against those who contend we are in the middle of an "ecumenical winter."

Using the World Council of Churches Assembly last December in Zimbabwe as an example, he is encouraged by a proposal for a Forum of Christian churches and ecumenical organizations that would bring a much more diverse group to the table to discuss common issues—including the Roman Catholics and some of the emerging evangelical churches. And he cited a new dialogue with Orthodox churches that object to what they perceive as a politicized agenda of the WCC.

While the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans move closer to a common statement on justification, erasing one of the major disagreements emerging from the Reformation, the Episcopal Church's dialogue with Roman Catholics has hit a few bumps in the road, especially in light of Pope John Paul II's encyclical blocking any consideration of the ordination of women. Yet participants in that dialogue have adopted a new level of realism—and determination.

"Disagreements are always serious, but they are tolerable in an environment of mutual respect," Bishop Ted Gulick of Kentucky said at a luncheon meeting of the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officers. As the new co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the USA he finds encouragement in the Vatican's decree on ecumenism which, after pointing to the split at the time of the Reformation, adds, "As a result, many communions, national or denominational, were separated from the Roman See. Among those in which some catholic traditions and institutions continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place." One of the tasks of the dialogue, he said, "is to find language which describes and articulates the unity that is the Spirit's gift."

No time for discouragement

In her keynote address at the workshop, the Rev. Ellen Wondra of Bexley Hall Seminary in Rochester also took encouragement with the hard work and steady progress of ecumenical efforts. "Our work is a sign that our churches are also in the midst of a conversion—from dividedness to communion and unity," she said.

Continuing divisions are "complicated and they are deeply rooted," she added. "We are dealing with firm beliefs and also with entrenched attitudes and behaviors," but also "a tendency to overstate the difficulties, and to understate our own capacities to deal with them."

Wondra is convinced that "a mature approach to our situation entails the recognition that conversion is the graced work of generations as well. And a mature approach entails our taking risks—carefully considered, of course, but risks nonetheless."

She labeled as sinful "the dividedness among us as indicative of the dividedness within us, in which we both want and do not want to be changed" and the kind of reliance on ourselves that produces discouragement. "As Christians and ecumenists we have much to rejoice in—God's calling to the church to be one is indeed coming to pass. May we all, then, be of good courage and steadfast faith, open to each other's wisdom and needs, and open to the new realities into which God is, even now, bringing us."

--James Solheim is the Episcopal Church's director of news and information. The ELCA news office contributed to this report.

99-075

Lutherans choosing sides as vote nears on full communion with Episcopalians

by James Solheim

(ENS) As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) move towards a vote this summer on a proposal for full communion with the Episcopal Church, the tension is increasing and Lutherans are choosing sides.

As the debate over the latest proposal for a concordat between the two churches intensifies, it has divided the faculties of the ELCA seminaries. "The reasons to approve the document are numerous, and to our thinking outweigh reasons for rejection," said the faculty of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, in endorsing "Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement," or CCM for short.

On the other hand, the faculty at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, said that it was "not of one mind about this proposal," expressing the hope that "even our disagreements can serve to facilitate constructive discussion of the proposal" when it comes before the Churchwide Assembly in August in Denver.

Dialogues between the churches produced a Concordat of Agreement in 1991 that was accepted by the Episcopal Church's 1997 General Convention but fell six votes short of a two-thirds majority required by the ELCA's Churchwide Assembly. The CCM is a rewrite, clarifying many of the objections and misunderstandings in the original concordat.

"The visible unity of the church is vital to God's mission that the world believe," said the Rev. Dennis A. Anderson, president of Trinity, in a personal statement. "We are not free

to pass by, ignore, neglect or fail to take action that promotes the unity of the church of Jesus Christ, unless such action is in fact contrary to the Gospel.”

In addressing the most contentious issue in the search for full communion, Anderson added, “We are free... to accept the historic episcopate as a human but not a divine tradition.”

No fear of changes

Southern Seminary’s statement outlined four reasons for its support of CCM:

- The Lutheran Confessions indicate a desire to hold on to the historic episcopate;
- Acceptance of the historic episcopate is consistent with Martin Luther’s understanding of evangelical freedom;
- CCM makes clear distinctions between the importance of the Gospel in word and sacrament as the foundation of church unity, and the historic episcopate as an expression of church unity; and
- Approval of CCM would help the mission of the church.

Similar arguments were advanced recently when the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia strongly encouraged adoption of CCM, adding in a unanimous statement that faculty members recognized that “both churches may need to accommodate certain aspects of their organizational life in order to welcome fully their brothers and sisters in the other church—and to be welcomed by them. We do not fear these changes,” the statement said. “The Gospel, as witnessed to in the Lutheran Confessions and in our churches, remains pure and strong even when we change or abandon cherished practices and traditions.”

Opponents well-organized

Opponents of CCM, however, are well organized and include some of the church’s major leaders, past and present.

For the second time, a mid-May meeting in Mahtomedi, Minnesota, drew some strong voices. Dr. Randall Balmer, professor of American religion at Columbia University in New York, said in his opening address to the conference that the ecumenical movement has been “both a mistake and a failure,” largely because it has lost touch with the grassroots in its eagerness to minimize differences. “The ecumenical movement is an idea whose time has gone,” he said.

While CCM purports to be about mission, it “says virtually nothing substantive about mission,” charged Dr. Cynthia Jurisson, who teaches American church history at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. She argued that both churches, marked by different religious subcultures and forms of governance, can coexist peacefully without CCM. “Our differences can define us but need not divide us,” she said.

Prof. Gordon Huffman, Jr. of Trinity Seminary in Ohio agreed, suggesting that both churches can work together in many ways now, without CCM and without sharing the historic episcopate. And he charged that some people have been “threatened and vilified” for opposing CCM, without identifying anyone.

Prof. Michael Rogness of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, a hotbed of resistance to CCM, said that attempts by ELCA bishops to clarify their understanding of the proposal is “symptomatic of the problem.” He is convinced that CCM is “way out of tune with the way the world is running. Frankly, I’m tired of it and I wish the church would get back to proclaiming the Gospel.”

A resolution of the first Mahtomedi Conference, calling on the ELCA to reject CCM because of the historic episcopate, has been introduced at a number of synod assemblies, with varying results. Participants at the May meeting outlined specific strategies for dealing with the CCM at the synod and national level.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information. This story is based on reports from the ELCA news office by Frank Imhoff and John Brooks.

99-076

Traditionalists raise the stakes by challenging authority of diocesan bishops

by James Solheim

(ENS) Attempts by parishes in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania to leave the Episcopal Church—and an invitation by a bishop in Bethlehem for traditionalists in a neighboring diocese to cross diocesan boundaries for confirmation rites—have sharpened the debate over the role of traditionalists in the life of the church in a post-Lambeth Conference climate.

A long-standing dispute at St. Paul's Parish in Brockton was resolved by the courts in favor of the Diocese of Massachusetts in March and Bishop M. Thomas Shaw assumed direct responsibility for the parish. The congregation voted to withdraw from the church in 1996 and its rector was later defrocked for sexual misconduct.

Dissident members of the parish have been holding services on the sidewalk in front of the church, before moving to a nearby auditorium. Bishop FitzSimons Allison, the retired bishop of South Carolina, risked disciplinary action by entering the diocese, without Shaw's permission, to preside at a Eucharist on May 16. "I definitely broke canon laws," the bishop admitted. "Right now, I think it would be a badge of honor to be censured by the House of Bishops."

Allison said in a newspaper interview that he was not worried about punishment. "The congregation is in accord with the teachings of the Anglican community. The diocese is not. What happens here will set a precedent," he said.

Allison and other conservatives are part of a move to force the Episcopal Church to comply with resolutions from last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, especially those condemning homosexual activity as "contrary to Scripture," and advising against ordinations or the blessing same-sex unions. They also cite a resolution advising against attempts to force bishops to accept the ordination of women.

No longer a place?

In the Diocese of Pennsylvania, a prominent parish affiliated with the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA), an umbrella organization of those opposed to women in the priesthood and the ordination of homosexuals, voted in April to leave the Episcopal Church.

Bishop Charles Bennison called the action by St. James the Less "a very grievous thing and a very serious thing," expressing his hope that a meeting with the parish could establish a reconciliation. It is one of several ESA parishes in the diocese that have not paid their diocesan assessments and have refused to allow visitations by Bennison or the suffragan, Bishop Frank Turner, raising canonical issues. The church's canon law requires

bishops to “visit the congregations within the diocese at least once in three years” and, during the visitation, to “preside at the Holy Eucharist and at the initiatory rites, as required, preach the word, examine the records of the congregation... and examine the life and ministry of the clergy and congregation.”

The General Convention’s decision to enforce the canon on women in the priesthood, making it mandatory in all dioceses, was cited by one vestry member, Becky Wilhoite, as a signal that “led us to believe that there really is no longer a place for us in the Episcopal Church.” She said that the parish is “not leaving the diocese or leaving ECUSA to go somewhere else. We want to remain part of the Anglican Communion. We don’t yet know exactly how that will occur” but she did hold out the possibility of oversight by an African bishop.

The rector, David Ousley, also said that Bennison’s decision not to renew the license of an assistant at the parish “obviously put a crimp in the ministry.” Bennison said that he would renew the licenses of priests in parishes committed to leaving the Episcopal Church only if they moved to other parishes. And he said that his goal was “to hold onto the property,” arguing that “we have a responsibility to the past—all those people who, since its beginning in 1846, gave of their lives and labors to build up the congregation.” Three bishops are buried in the graveyard at St. James:

A welcome mat for traditionalists

Bishop Paul Marshall of the neighboring Diocese of Bethlehem, distressed by what he called “increasing polarization,” stepped into the controversy when he invited an ESA bishop to preside at a confirmation service for traditionalist parishes in the Diocese of Pennsylvania in his own diocese.

Explaining his actions in a letter to the diocesan clergy, Marshall said, “I understand myself to be creating something like ‘a city of refuge’ for those who, for whatever reason, find it desirable to worship with like-minded bishops—just as Bethlehem is already a safe place for people with other points of view.” He granted blanket permission to Bishop Donald Parsons, retired bishop of Quincy (Illinois) and Bishop Keith Ackerman, current bishop of Quincy, to preach and celebrate in the diocese.

Marshall also said that he would seek support for a resolution at next summer’s General Convention apologizing to those “who have been alienated or whose faith has been injured by any insensitivity in imposing the prayer book of 1979.”

Parsons visited Bethlehem’s only ESA parish, St. Stephen’s in Whitehall, on May 18 and confirmed an estimated 40, the majority of them from the Diocese of Pennsylvania. After a meeting in New York with Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, Marshall did not participate but was in the congregation.

Marshall reported on the service in a message to the diocese on its Web site. “The mood of the group was not defiant or victim-like but eucharistic,” he wrote. “Reactions from the crowd after the service were generally quite grateful,” although he reported one woman accosted him charging that he “chose to be a politician instead of a shepherd tonight.” Another said that Marshall’s action might have kept four churches from leaving the denomination.

Pastoral not political

In an interview with the *Pennsylvania Episcopalian*, Marshall said that his chief concern was for the youth who would not understand why they couldn’t be confirmed. “So I do not understand this as a political act, I understand this as a pastoral one.”

He said that his hand had been forced when a reporter “somehow got wind of this and made it a news story... I had never meant for this to be this public an issue—and I certainly

don't mean it to be an embarrassment to Bishop Bennison. But on the other hand, I believe in what I am doing. I make no apology."

Marshall said that "you could argue that what I'm doing takes some of the pressure off because there aren't any hostages." And he is convinced that "how one treats minorities is an important issue for me, whether they happen to be conservative minorities or liberal minorities."

As he said in his letter to the clergy, he was motivated "to share the hospitality and openness that we enjoy with those who consider themselves marginalized by changes that have taken place in the church."

Marshall's actions are also raising canonical issues since he is, in effect, allowing ESA clergy in the Diocese of Pennsylvania to circumvent the authority of their own bishops by seeking confirmation in an adjoining diocese.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information. Parts of this article are based on reports by Jerry Hames and Sharon Sheridan for Episcopal Life.

99-077

Global Mission Network looks ahead to challenges of next millennium

by Margaret Larom

(ENS) Describing God's mission as the salvation and liberation of humankind, Africa's senior Anglican archbishop has urged Episcopalians to move out from their altars and meet people where they are, as Jesus did.

"We must enable God to transform us," declared the Most Rev. Khotso Makhulu, primate of the church in Central Africa and bishop of Botswana, in his keynote speech at the annual Global Episcopal Mission (GEM) Network educational institute April 29-May 1 in Denver.

Speaking on the theme of "Empowering Global Mission into the Next Millennium," the archbishop argued that the church must be engaged in the tasks of transformation and reconciliation, using not only the Great Commission but also Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) to undergird any involvement in mission and evangelism.

Christians are called not only to make Jesus "attractive" to everyone, but also to convince his followers to "live courageously with the challenge of change.... Is this church so freed from prejudice that it can face the challenges of the ensuing years?" Makhulu asked.

The church is not only for sanctuary or sanctimony, he said, adding that "Christians must be at the heart of reconciliation, the champions of the poor and the oppressed. He deplored the absence of heroes like Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King, Jr. "In a broken world, surely one area of missional involvement is healing."

Salty soundbites, sage advice

Living up to his reputation, Makhulu's address was full of the sage advice that the Anglican Communion has come to expect from its senior African prelate, peppered with salty soundbites on the state of society as well as the church. He described the church as "the home of sinners, where saints are molded," but insisted that improvements are necessary in every

area of congregational life, including attention to youth, empowerment of laity, enlivening worship and liturgy, deepening of prayer life and scripture study.

The important question, he argued, is “Are your doors open? Are you a welcoming church?”

In global terms Makhulu expressed concern over the absence of nourishing relationships among churches in the Anglican Communion—and what he characterized as the virtual dormancy of ecumenical relations, characterized by endless dialogues that never lead to improved relationships

The missionary mindset

Bishop Munawar (Mano) Rumlshah of Pakistan, who was recently appointed general secretary of the United Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, observed that the mission mindset is still that of sender/receiver. He urged a new modality of relationship, using the language and symbolism of the body of Christ, rather than “partnership” or even “mutual responsibility and interdependence.” If we are part of the body of Christ, that means sharing the same metabolism, he declared. “To me a missionary is like a transplant into another part of the body. Rejection can mean death for both, acceptance can mean life for both.”

He urged Episcopalians to look at giving and receiving as something natural within the economy of God. “It’s so difficult for people in the West to believe they can receive, and so difficult for others to believe they have anything to offer. Some seem to feel they’re trading material resources for spirituality, and vice versa.”

Using Pakistan as an example, he said that when Christianity was introduced 200 years ago, the missionaries reached out to the outcasts, the untouchables. “The scum of the earth received the Gospel in its whole incarnated truth. Yet today, two-thirds of my people still carry human excrement in their hands to make a living. ... You’d have to be mad to be a Christian. It’s not a community of hope or wholesomeness, but a people completely deprived. The eradication of poverty is the number one task if the mission is to be credible. Somehow we’ve perpetuated this evil,” Mano said.

He also warned about the globalization of culture and the degradation of the environment, and urged Christians to seek ways of influencing situations where people are being exploited. “The mission challenge is to empower and enable so that poverty and pollution don’t devour us all.”

Both Archbishop Makhulu and Bishop Rumlshah addressed the crushing burden of international debt and the “evil” of poverty. Mano noted that two common themes that emerged in all nine regional gatherings prior to the Lambeth Conference were international debt and the world of Islam.

The future of mission

In small groups, more than 90 participants representing 38 dioceses described mission initiatives in their regions, and dreamed about what the future of mission will be. These visions included:

- A revival of missionary sending in the church, with better information, training, financial support, communication and networking capability, all informed by intentional intercessory prayer;
- Forgiveness of the third world debt, eradication of religious persecution, reconciliation among racial and ethnic minorities and people of other faiths;
- Short-term mission experiences for all clergy and seminarians, led by their bishops;

- Cross-cultural experiences for all confirmands, and more mission opportunities for youth;
- Greater attention to non-traditional ways and places for spreading the Gospel, such as prison ministries;
- Listening and praying, listening and praying, and seeing mission as part of our baptismal covenant;
- More connections between justice and mission.

The GEM Network, launched by the dioceses of New York and Southern Ohio in 1994 in response to a recognized need for more diocesan engagement in mission at the congregational level, now includes 51 dioceses. It works in collaboration with the Anglican and Global Relations staff at the Episcopal Church Center, with voluntary mission societies and other member agencies of the Episcopal Council for Global Mission, and with ecumenical partners. The Rt. Rev. David B. Reed, retired bishop of Kentucky, is the executive director. A governing board consists of 12 members representing member dioceses.

In addition to the annual meeting and educational institute, the GEM Network is engaged in a number of projects. Reed presented the new GEM Handbook at the Denver meeting. Contents include chapters on Organizing a Diocese for Global Mission, Sending Mission Workers from a Diocese, Short Term Mission Visits, and Receiving Missionaries. Member dioceses have received two copies each (as well as one for the bishop's office), but additional copies are available from Bishop Reed (telephone 1-888-913-6858; fax 502-721-8754; e-mail david_reed@ecunet.org).

--Margaret Larom is mission interpreter for the church's Anglican and Global Relations cluster.

99-078

Mother of murdered gay student urges passage of hate crimes bill

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) In emotional testimony, the mother of murdered gay college student Matthew Shepard urged a U.S. Senate panel to support the Hate Crimes Prevention Act "to help make sure no family again has to suffer like mine."

In May 11 testimony, Judy Shepard recalled for the Senate Judiciary Committee the days last October when she and her husband, Dennis, were summoned from their home in Saudi Arabia, where Dennis Shepard works for an oil company, to Wyoming where they had lived while Matthew was growing up.

Matthew, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming, had been badly beaten and left tied to a fence post in an act prompted at least in part by the fact that he was gay. He died a few days later. One man has pleaded guilty and received two consecutive life sentences for the murder; another man is scheduled to go on trial in August.

"We need to decide what kind of nation we want to be," Judy Shepard said. "One that treats all people with dignity and respect, or one that allows some people and their family members to become marginalized." She noted that since 1991, hate crimes have nearly doubled. In 1997, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's most recent reporting period, race-related hate crimes represented nearly 60 percent of all cases; gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans were victims of about 14 percent.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act was introduced in Congress last year, but was not passed. The bill was reintroduced in March by a group of Congress members led by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA).

It would expand the circumstances under which a hate crime could be federally prosecuted. Current law allows prosecution only if the victim was exercising a federally protected right, such as voting, enrolling in school or serving as a juror. The bill also would allow local law enforcement entities to receive more federal assistance in prosecuting hate crimes.

"I know this measure is not a cure-all," Judy Shepard said, "and it won't stop all hate violence. But it will send the message that this senseless violence is unacceptable and un-American. It will let perpetrators of hate violence know their actions will be punished."

A bishop declares support

At a press conference before the hearing, Jane Holmes Dixon, suffragan bishop of Washington, emphasized her support for the measure. She pointed not only at the case of Matthew Shepard, who was an acolyte in his hometown Episcopal church, but also to that of James Byrd Jr., an African-American man dragged to his death in Texas, and Billy Jack Gaither, a gay man slain in Alabama.

Dixon recalled her childhood in Mississippi, when a 14-year-old African-American boy "was shot dead and dumped in a river in 1955 for daring to speak to a white woman in a grocery store." Despite some "real progress" toward ending violence against persons because of their race or creed, she noted that "the gruesome murder in Jasper, Texas, last year reminds us that that work is not yet complete.

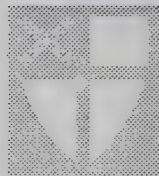
"The work we must now begin is for national legislation that seeks to end crimes of hate based on the sexual orientation, or gender, or disability of the victim," she said. "The need has been made clear to us recently. We have had a crucifixion in the Wyoming winter, and a man beaten to death in Alabama and his body burned on a pyre of automobile tires just weeks ago. People of faith cannot stand quietly by while such evil persists in our midst," she added.

The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution last October, urging Congress to "enact legislation to expand the definition of hate crimes to include gender, sexual orientation or disability (in addition to color, race, religion, or national origin) and expand the number or settings in which the law could be applied."

The resolution came out of a council meeting at which Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, made a special address. She noted the sympathetic statements that were made in the wake of Matthew Shepard's death but added, "We need actions to back up our words."

Among several suggestions for actions against hate she called for the preparation of a brochure that would list anti-hate resources for use by individuals or congregations. The brochure is now available from the church's Office of Peace and Justice Ministries, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Questions may be directed to Johny Itty, social justice officer, at jitty@dfms.org

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church. The church's Office of Government Relations assisted in preparing this article.



news digest

99-072D

Kosovo refugees in U.S. begin meeting their new communities

(ENS) The Kosovo refugees who arrived at Ft. Dix in New Jersey recently have undergone batteries of medical and background checks and they have received a short introduction to American life. Three families have taken the next giant step into their new lives: They left Ft. Dix for new homes in Sarasota, Florida; Boise, Idaho; and Seattle.

Since then, other families have also traveled to new homes as the refugees' welcome to the U.S. begins its next phase, actual resettlement in American communities.

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), one of 10 agencies working with the U.S. government in the resettlement process, is playing a key role, said its director Richard Parkins, noting that two of the first three families to leave Ft. Dix were placed in new homes through EMM affiliates in the Diocese of Idaho and the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

These families, like most of the families at Ft. Dix, are "free" cases, meaning that they do not have relatives living in the U.S., he said. EMM already has reunited families in Waterbury, Connecticut; Austin, Texas; Detroit, and Miami.

"Things are swinging," Sandra Richardson, a diocesan-based affiliate of EMM in Detroit, reported in a recent e-mail to the office in New York. Richardson, an Episcopal priest, went on to report that her network was preparing to receive a number of Albanian families.

Richardson also said that volunteers have come forward to help with the coordination of sponsors, families, community groups and agencies and school, work and housing arrangements. "People want to be involved now," she said, adding that many volunteers had not known before that the Episcopal Church is involved in refugee work.

Parkins said that while the work is hard, EMM has been able to rely on years of experience to quickly find and assess sites for resettlement—places that have a workable combination of good housing, jobs that can support families, and communities that share the refugees' culture. For the Kosovo refugees, an Islamic support system will be very important, he said.

At the moment, he added, his office and its 38 affiliates across the country are "certainly working flat-out to respond to the Kosovo crisis."

He said he marveled at the support that the resettlement effort has received from the church and from communities. "I'm under no illusion that we're doing this alone," he said. "This is a partnership of agencies, of the government and of many people across the church." (See Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold's own recent update on the church's response to the Kosovo crisis in *NewsFeatures*.)

Part of that support is coming specifically from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, which has sent \$120,000 to Action by Churches Together (ACT), a relief organization working in the refugee camps in countries adjacent to Kosovo.

The fund also plans to contribute to the resettlement effort in the U.S., said Sandra Swan, director of the fund, who added that the response by people in the church to the Kosovars' plight continues to be strong. --by Kathryn McCormick

99-073D

Anglicans and Roman Catholics release statement on Authority

(ENS) After five years of careful dialogue, the co-chairs of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on May 12 released the text of "The Gift of Authority" at a news conference in London's Westminster Abbey.

The new statement emerges from a series of dialogues that began with a 1966 visit of Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI at the Vatican. They have produced a number of statements on the Eucharist, Ministry and Ordination, and now Authority in the Church. "The Gift of Authority" is the fourth statement from the second phase of ARCIC's work.

Authority, particularly the authority of the Bishop of Rome, has been "a key element in the division that occurred at the time of the English Reformation," said the Church of England's Bishop Mark Santer of Birmingham, and Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Catholic bishop of Arundel and Brighton, at the press conference.

"For four centuries the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church developed their structures of authority in separation from each other, and Anglicans lived without the ministry of the Bishop of Rome," they said.

A Final Report issued in 1981 at the end of the first round of dialogues revealed broad agreement on how authority operates in the church, the role of bishops, and even about the significance of the papal office in "a reunited Church and the place his ministry has in God's providential plan for his Church." Yet the report also revealed "some serious issues had still to be resolved." Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey and Pope John Paul II agreed in 1996 that "we shall not reach the full visible unity to which we are both committed" without an agreement on authority.

The statement agrees about the role of the Bishop of Rome "within the college of bishops concerning the discernment of truth," making it clear that in certain circumstances he has "a duty to discern and make explicit, in fidelity to Scripture and Tradition, the authentic faith of the whole Church, that is the faith of all the baptized in communion." ARCIC said that it believes that "this is a gift to be received by all the Churches and is entailed in the recognition of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome."

In a covering memo to the Episcopal Church's bishops and ecumenical participants, the Rev. David Perry said that the topic of authority may sound esoteric but he stressed its importance for the life of the whole church. "We are talking about how decisions are made in the church—by whom and with what effect," said the church's ecumenical officer. "The issue goes to the heart of all our relationships, not only within our own church but in our relationship with ecumenical partners. And how we view authority is related to almost every other issue in our life together."

(The text is available on the Websites for both churches: www.anglicancommunion.org and www.nccbuscc.org, and in printed version from the Episcopal Book and Resource Center in New York (tel. 800-334-7626, ext. 6118).

---James Solheim

99-074D

Workshop on Unity draws over 400 ecumenists from several traditions

(ENS) Drawn by a common commitment to the search for Christian unity, about 400 representatives of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches met in Rochester, New York, in May to celebrate recent advances, discuss continuing barriers to unity—and to dream about the future.

“Without love at the center, the ecumenical journey will flounder and collapse and our carefully wrought compacts and agreements will be lifeless,” warned Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold at the opening plenary of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO), one of the denominational organizations that meet as part of the Workshop for Christian Unity.

“The division and distress of our world—to which communities of faith have so sadly contributed—and God’s passionate desire to reconcile and make all things new, call us to repentance: to yield our several certainties and allow ourselves to be pulled out of our ecclesial securities, by the power and urgency of God’s deathless and recreative and reordering love.”

Several speakers addressed both the recent successes and continuing frustrations in the ecumenical agenda. Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church USA urged participants to push through the barriers because unity among the churches will help them address a wide range of issues in a broken world.

“We live in a difficult ecumenical era,” he said, but “the dreams are no less valued and important.” He saw many signs of hope, citing progress on the Consultation on Church Union, which is bringing together nine different churches. Churches of the Reformed tradition, including the Presbyterians, have recently established a relationship of full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

The struggle for a similar relationship between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church narrowly failed when the Lutherans failed by six votes to adopt a Concordat of Agreement at their 1997 Churchwide Assembly. They will vote again next summer on a rewritten proposal, “Called to Common Mission” (CCM), but opposition is well organized, centered on a requirement that the Lutherans adopt the historic episcopate.

"We are asking to be reincorporated into the historic episcopate, which most of Christendom has," Prof. Donald Armentrout, an ELCA pastor who teaches at the Episcopal seminary in Sewanee, told Lutheran and Episcopal ecumenical officers. "The ELCA is being asked to adopt a sign of apostolicity that is not necessary but may help us in our mission to the world."

The Episcopal Church's dialogue with Roman Catholics has hit a few bumps in the road, especially in light of Pope John Paul II's encyclical blocking any consideration of the ordination of women. Yet participants in that dialogue have adopted a new level of realism—and determination.

"Disagreements are always serious, but they are tolerable in an environment of mutual respect," Bishop Ted Gulick of Kentucky said at a luncheon meeting of the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officers. As the new co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the USA he finds encouragement in the Vatican's decree on ecumenism which, after pointing to the split at the time of the Reformation, adds, "As a result, many communions, national or denominational, were separated from the Roman See. Among those in which some catholic traditions and institutions continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place." One of the tasks of the dialogue, he said, "is to find language which describes and articulates the unity that is the Spirit's gift." — **by James Solheim**

99-075D

Lutherans choosing sides as vote nears on full communion with Episcopalians

(ENS) As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) move towards a vote this summer on a proposal for full communion with the Episcopal Church, the tension is increasing and Lutherans are choosing sides.

As the debate over the latest proposal for a concordat between the two churches intensifies, it has divided the faculties of the ELCA's seminaries. "The reasons to approve the document are numerous, and to our thinking outweigh reasons for rejection," said the faculty of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, in endorsing "Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement," or CCM for short.

On the other hand, the faculty at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, said that it was "not of one mind about this proposal," expressing the hope that "even our disagreements can serve to facilitate constructive discussion of the proposal" when it comes before the Churchwide Assembly in August in Denver.

Dialogues between the churches produced a Concordat of Agreement in 1991 that was accepted by the Episcopal Church's 1997 General Convention but fell six votes short of a two-thirds majority required by the ELCA's Churchwide Assembly. The CCM is a rewrite, clarifying many of the objections and misunderstandings in the original concordat.

"The visible unity of the church is vital to God's mission that the world believe," said the Rev. Dennis A. Anderson, president of Trinity, in a personal statement. "We are not free to pass by, ignore, neglect or fail to take action that promotes the unity of the church of Jesus Christ, unless such action is in fact contrary to the Gospel."

In addressing the most contentious issue in the search for full communion, Anderson added, "We are free... to accept the historic episcopate as a human but not a divine tradition."

Southern Seminary's statement outlined four reasons for its support of CCM:

- The Lutheran Confessions indicate a desire to hold on to the historic episcopate;
- Acceptance of the historic episcopate is consistent with Martin Luther's understanding of evangelical freedom;
- CCM makes clear distinctions between the importance of the Gospel in word and sacrament as the foundation of church unity, and the historic episcopate as an expression of church unity; and
- Approval of CCM would help the mission of the church.

Similar arguments were advanced recently when the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia strongly encouraged adoption of CCM, adding in a unanimous statement that faculty members recognized that "both churches may need to accommodate certain aspects of their organizational life in order to welcome fully their brothers and sisters in the other church—and to be welcomed by them. We do not fear these changes," the statement said. "The Gospel, as witnessed to in the Lutheran Confessions and in our churches, remains pure and strong even when we change or abandon cherished practices and traditions."

Opponents of CCM, however, are well organized and include some of the church's major leaders, past and present.

For the second time, a mid-May meeting in Mahtomedi, Minnesota, drew some strong voices. Dr. Randall Balmer, professor of American religion at Columbia University in New York, said in his opening address to the conference that the ecumenical movement has been "both a mistake and a failure," largely because it has lost touch with the grassroots in its eagerness to minimize differences. "The ecumenical movement is an idea whose time has gone," he said.

While CCM purports to be about mission, it "says virtually nothing substantive about mission," charged Dr. Cynthia Jurisson, who teaches American church history at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. She argued that both churches, marked by different religious subcultures and forms of governance, can coexist peacefully without CCM. "Our differences can define us but need not divide us," she said. — **by James Solheim**

99-076D

Traditionalists raise the stakes by challenging authority of diocesan bishops

(ENS) Attempts by parishes in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania to leave the Episcopal Church—and an invitation by a bishop in Bethlehem for traditionalists in a neighboring diocese to cross diocesan boundaries for confirmation rites—have sharpened the debate over the role of traditionalists in the life of the church in a post-Lambeth Conference climate.

A long-standing dispute at St. Paul's Parish in Brockton was resolved by the courts in favor of the Diocese of Massachusetts in March and Bishop M. Thomas Shaw assumed direct responsibility for the parish. The congregation voted to withdraw from the church in 1996 and its rector was defrocked for sexual misconduct.

Dissident members of the parish have been holding services on the sidewalk in front of the church, before moving to a nearby auditorium. Bishop FitzSimons Allison, the retired bishop of South Carolina, risked disciplinary action by entering the diocese, without Shaw's permission, to preside at a Eucharist on May 16. "I definitely broke canon laws," the bishop admitted. "Right now, I think it would be a badge of honor to be censured by the House of Bishops."

Allison said in a newspaper interview that he was not worried about punishment. "The congregation is in accord with the teachings of the Anglican community. The diocese is not. What happens here will set a precedent," he said.

Allison and other conservatives are part of a move to force the Episcopal Church to comply with resolutions from last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, especially those condemning homosexual activity as "contrary to Scripture," and advising against ordinations or the blessing same-sex unions. They also cite a resolution deploring attempts to force bishops to accept the ordination of women.

In the Diocese of Pennsylvania, a prominent parish affiliated with the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA), an umbrella organization of those opposed to women in the priesthood and the ordination of homosexuals, voted in April to leave the Episcopal Church.

Bishop Charles Bennison called the action by St. James the Less "a very grievous thing and a very serious thing," expressing his hope that a meeting with the parish could establish a reconciliation. It is one of several ESA parishes in the diocese that have not paid their diocesan assessments and have refused to allow visitations by Bennison or the suffragan, Bishop Frank Turner, raising canonical issues.

Bishop Paul Marshall of the neighboring Diocese of Bethlehem, distressed by what he called "increasing polarization," stepped into the controversy when he invited an ESA bishop to preside at a confirmation service for traditionalist parishes in the Diocese of Pennsylvania in his own diocese.

Explaining his actions in a letter to the diocesan clergy, Marshall said, "I understand myself to be creating something like 'a city of refuge' for those who, for whatever reason, find it desirable to worship with like-minded bishops—just as Bethlehem is already a safe place for people with other points of view." He granted blanket permission to Bishop Donald Parsons, retired bishop of Quincy (Illinois) and Bishop Keith Ackerman, current bishop of Quincy, to preach and celebrate in the diocese.

Parsons visited Bethlehem's only ESA parish, St. Stephen's in Whitehall, on May 18 and confirmed an estimated 40, the majority of them from the Diocese of Pennsylvania. After a meeting in New York with Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, Marshall did not participate but was in the congregation.

In an interview with the *Pennsylvania Episcopalian*, Marshall said that his chief concern was for the youth who would not understand why they couldn't be confirmed. "So I do not understand this as a political act, I understand this as a pastoral one."

—by James Solheim

99-077D

Global Mission Network looks ahead to challenges of next millennium

(ENS) Describing God's mission as the salvation and liberation of humankind, Africa's senior Anglican archbishop has urged Episcopalians to move out from their altars and meet people where they are, as Jesus did.

"We must enable God to transform us," declared the Most Rev. Khotso Makhulu, primate of the church in Central Africa and bishop of Botswana, in his keynote speech at the annual Global Episcopal Mission (GEM) Network educational institute April 29-May 1 in Denver.

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The important question, he argued, is "Are your doors open? Are you a welcoming church?"

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99-078D

Mother of murdered gay student urges passage of hate crimes bill

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At a press conference before the hearing, Jane Holmes Dixon, suffragan bishop of Washington, emphasized her support for the measure. She pointed not only at the case of Matthew Shepard, who was an acolyte in his hometown Episcopal church, but also to that of James Byrd Jr., an African-American man dragged to his death in Texas, and Billy Jack Gaither, a gay man slain in Alabama.

“The work we must now begin is for national legislation that seeks to end crimes of hate based on the sexual orientation, or gender, or disability of the victim,” she said. “The need has been made clear to us recently. We have had a crucifixion in the Wyoming winter, and a man beaten to death in Alabama and his body burned on a pyre of automobile tires just weeks ago. People of faith cannot stand quietly by while such evil persists in our midst,” she added.

The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution last October, urging Congress to “enact legislation to expand the definition of hate crimes to include gender, sexual orientation or disability (in addition to color, race, religion, or national origin) and expand the number or settings in which the law could be applied.”

— by **Kathryn McCormick**



news briefs

99-079

Episcopal Church Center building closing

(ENS) During the weeks of August 9 and 16, the Church Center in New York will be closed for the removal of asbestos from the heating equipment room.

A minimal amount of essential functions will go on during the two-week building closure so some staff will be available.

Please continue to read ENS and our web site (www.ecusa.anglican.org/ens) for continual updates.

Anglican and United Church Canadians seek relationship

(ANS) A group of representatives of the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada gathered in Regina, Saskatchewan, April 29-30 to explore what sort of future relationship might be possible between the two churches.

According to a report, there has been no formal dialogue between the churches since the collapse of the proposed Plan of Union in 1975. The recent initiative came from the Faith Worship and Ministry Committee of the Anglican General Synod and was welcomed by the Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee of the United Church General Council.

The report went on to say that the group participants identified the purpose of their relationship to be increased understanding and ability to communicate, with the purpose of better enabling shared ministry and mission.

Some of the issues identified included liturgy and ministry; being accountable to one another while engaged in common mission; sharing information and establishing patterns of connecting and communicating power and authority.

The meeting concluded with a recommendation for staff to explore the possibility of conducting similar meetings in other parts of the country and report common agendas to consider the next steps.

For further information contact the Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Anglican Church, 416/924-9199 ext. 281; the Rev. Canon Helena Houldcroft, Faith Worship and Ministry Committee, 306/757-3173, the Rev. Kerry Craig, Inter-Church Inter-Faith, 204/822-4508; the Rev. Peter Wyatt, United Church, 416/231-5931.

Movement defies Pope on women's ordination

(ENI) Despite Pope John Paul II's ban on women's ordination, a training course has been launched in Austria for Roman Catholic women wishing to become priests.

According to a report, the course was designed by the "We are Church" movement with the expectation that a future pope would change the church's rules on the ordination of women.

"We are certain a future pope-though not necessarily the next one-will give different signals than John Paul II, and that an ecumenical council will ultimately decide in favor of women priests," said Hubert Feichtlbauer, chairperson of the "We are Church" movement in Austria. The only questions for us are whether we've started too early and whether we'll unwittingly fuel frustrations or encourage rash actions."

He said applicants to the course should have theological training at a Catholic divinity school or in a diocesan program. But he added, "I don't expect any diocese will agree to work with us officially. But nor do I think they will hinder our activities."

The courses will instruct women on how to administer the sacraments, handle the media and guide and lead the parish community. Feichtlbauer also said the women will receive training in the "psychology and technicalities" of the priesthood, similar to that provided at male seminaries.

He continued that Austria's Roman Catholic bishops had so far avoided "official reactions" to this initiative but several priests and theologians had volunteered to help with the course.

However, Professor Paul Zulehner, an Austrian theologian, dismissed this course as "not serious." He said, "There are some women theologians who want to be ordained and are preparing for it," Zulehner said. "But this initiative is really just a protest and a gimmick-particularly given their insistence that they won't accept ordination unless the church agrees."

Destruction of village in Sudan creates homeless

(ENS) The Sudanese government made 200 families homeless after bulldozers destroyed an Anglican Church.

According to a report from Open Doors USA, on May 2, the Jebel Aulia refugee camp, which is situated about 32 miles to the south of Khartoum in the middle of the desert, was officially demolished because the government allocated the land for agriculture.

Jebel Aulia camp residents, predominately Christians displaced from war-torn southern Sudan, now must continue their lives of extreme poverty while living exposed to the desert heat without access to drinking water, food and shelter.

Reportedly, two women have already died because of the heat.

"This incident of aggression by the Sudanese government against their nation's own Christian citizens is just the latest example of their desperate attempts to wipe out the church and create a wholly Islamic state," said Mike Yoder, director of communications for Open Doors, USA. "They lived in mud houses, possessed almost nothing and now they have lost even that."

Carey wants prayers at the Millennium Dome in London

(ENS) A church service may be held hours before the opening of the Millennium Dome to defuse concern over the Christian content of the celebrations.

According to a report, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, has threatened to boycott the dome's opening ceremony if he is prevented from leading the nation in a Christian prayer.

Some believe that the Dome organizers want to keep the New Year's Eve celebrations free of prayers and speeches so they can choreograph a show involving music, dance and lights. Others believe that the celebrations should be secular in tone because of the wide range of religious beliefs in the country.

The dome has been beset with controversy over its Christian content almost from its inception. According to a report in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Archbishop of York David Hope, said the dome was reflection of human arrogance rather than the humility of the crib at Bethlehem.

Gerald Kaufman, the committee chairperson, said that any boycott by spiritual leaders over the "absence of God" from events marking the 2000th anniversary of Christ's birth would be for them to decide. He continued, "I don't think it would be a reflection on them or the dome if they decided their place was elsewhere-perhaps in their cathedrals."

Kaufman backed plans by Chris Smith, the culture secretary, to center the celebrations on the Millennium Resolution, which commissioned meditation, and which has been condemned by many for not mentioning Jesus or God.

Meeting examines church-state ties in England

(ENS) Plans to loosen the historic and exclusive bond between the Church of England and the state were discussed at a private meeting at Windsor Castle in April.

According to *The Independent*, senior Anglican churchmen and Royal advisers agreed at the meeting that Roman Catholics, Baptists, Methodists and other Christian denominations should be given a greater formal role in the religious life of the nation.

The article said the three-day meeting, hosted by the Dean of Windsor, concluded that it was "inevitable" that the 450-year-old exclusive relationship between the Church of England and the state would change in order to serve the multicultural make-up of modern Britain.

Although church spokesmen stressed that this gathering was an informal "brainstorming" session, officials from the Anglican headquarters at Church House were among 24 senior clergy and academics who attended. "We knew the meeting was taking place," a Lambeth Palace spokesman said. "Clearly with a lot of things going on, like reform of the House of Lords, there is an interest in the relationship between church and state."

Archbishop of York David Hope acknowledged that reform is inevitable as Britain moves into the new millennium.

Christian and Muslim tension rises in Nazareth

(ENI) More than 70 Israeli police in riot gear were brought in to restore order outside the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth following mass on April 4.

The basilica was built in 1969 and is maintained by Franciscan monks. It sits atop the ruined walls of a 12th century Crusader church and marks the spot where, according to local tradition, the angel Gabriel told Mary she would be the savior's mother.

According to a report, fighting broke out between Christians and Muslims after Christians exiting mass threw stones at a group of Muslims camped near a half-acre site which is adjacent to the basilica.

The site has been earmarked by municipal authorities as a possible square for the year 2000 celebrations. But Muslims, who have been camped at the location for more than a year, protested against the project, arguing that a \$20 million mosque should be built there instead.

The report also said that some local people believe the Israeli government is mostly to blame because it allowed Muslims to set up a big tent on the disputed land. The tent is a makeshift mosque named after what Muslims believe to be the resting place of Shehab a-Din, the nephew of Saladin, the Islamic leader who defeated the Crusaders in the 12th century.

"There is an impasse," said the Rev. Eugene Nugent of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem. He dismissed reports that the various Christian denominations had accepted the Israeli government's compromise proposal to allow both a public square and a mosque to be built on the site with a division between the two.

Archbishop of Canterbury will initiate dialogue on homosexuality

(ENS) Defying some stiff criticism, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey is planning a "summit" meeting with those who advocate and those who oppose the ordination of gays and lesbians.

According to an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, hard-line evangelicals regarded the meeting as further evidence that church leadership was "weakening" in its official opposition, despite last summer's Lambeth Conference resolution in favor of upholding the church's traditional teaching. And they warned that any liberalization of policy on ordinations could provoke a split in the church more damaging than the one over the ordination of women. "It is all part and parcel of a move away from the Lambeth statement," said the Rev. Philip Hacking, chairman of the evangelical group called Reform.

"It is just one more move which underlines that the bishops are not taking the resolution seriously. This sort of meeting encourages the gay lobby to think they have the support of the episcopal bench. George Carey is weakening, and every time he weakens in this direction, they are given the impression they will get their way."

Lambeth Palace said that "it will be a private meeting," based on Carey's commitment to dialogue. Carey has been consistently opposed to any softening on the church's teaching on homosexuality and was a strong supporter of the Lambeth resolution condemning homosexual activity.

Canadian primate to attend forum on Balkan crisis

(ANS) Archbishop Michael Peers, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, will co-moderate a conference, in Budapest, of church leaders from eastern and western Europe on the churches' response to the Balkans crisis.

According to a report, NATO's action in Kosovo has produced markedly different-sometimes contradictory-responses among world church leaders. Relations between the large Orthodox churches and the rest of the ecumenical community, already strained by theological differences, have been further stressed by the continued bombing.

The report went on to say public opinion in the West has come to reflect Peers' view, of March 30, when he expressed horror at the continuing ethnic strife in Yugoslavia but said it was not clear that NATO's intervention would end the atrocities. He said NATO action was motivated by "high humanitarian ideals," but failed to meet several of the Christian criteria for a just war.

This conference is organized jointly by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary.

Bishop barred from cathedral in Venezuela

(ENS) The congregation at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Caracas, in Venezuela, has seceded from the Anglican diocese of Venezuela.

According to a report, the congregation has retained lawyers, filed charges against the diocese and Bishop Orlando Guerrero and on April 11 physically barred him from entering the cathedral. The postponement of the diocesan synod in 1998 because of anxiety surrounding the Venezuelan elections is being used as the main charge against the bishop.

Guerrero is being challenged by the Rev. Roger Dawson, rector of St. Mary's, who was quoted in a St. Mary's magazine as saying Guerrero "comes to plunder St. Mary's for the land and its money. The plot has not worked and I will on your behalf, fight him and those who think like him to the bitter end."

In a statement, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) certified that the Iglesia Anglicana en Venezuela was the legitimate Anglican presence in the country and confirmed Guerrero as its legal representative and chief pastor. "Any other church or organization by whatever name it may choose to present itself in this country is not part of the Anglican Communion as approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates of the Anglican Communion."

People

The Rev. Jim Fredrich, a filmmaker, writer and member of Episcopal Communicators, has won the top award for Biographical Profile in the 1998 Associated Church Press competition. "The Priestly Folly of Ken Feit," appearing in the Summer 1998 issue of "Christianity and the Arts" magazine, received the Award of Excellence.

Andrew Ignatieff, of Toronto, was appointed director of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Ignatieff was a program manager with UNICEF Canada who evaluated programs in Latin America, Francophone Africa and Central Europe. He was also the liaison between UNICEF and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He will assume his new position in August.



news features

99-080

Killings trigger new kind of gunfight in Utah

by Jeff Sells

In its zeal to protect the members of religious communities in the State of Utah, the State Legislature in January passed a statute addressing Utahns' closely held right to carry concealed weapons. Churches—and private homeowners, for that matter—who feel that their buildings are not places to carry concealed guns are now required to post notices specifically prohibiting people from carrying weapons inside.

"How else are you going to determine who is liable if someone comes in and starts shooting up the place?" said one legislator, explaining the reasoning behind the change in the law.

In response to the new statute, the Diocese of Utah has produced a sign stating that guns are not welcome in its church buildings. Each congregation in the diocese has been asked to put the sign in a visible place on its property, in keeping with the requirements of the new statute.

"I think the State Legislature should feel ashamed that this is going on," said Bishop Carolyn Tanner Irish of Utah. "I am greatly saddened that we must put up these signs," Irish said. "It makes [the Legislature] look foolish, and it is very sad indeed."

The context of violence

Earlier this year, Salt Lake City experienced the random killing of a woman in a downtown business and, later, one man's rampage that killed two and wounded several others in the Mormon Family History Library, in downtown Salt Lake, only a few days after the shootings in Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. After all of these events, there has been a groundswell of calls for a special session of the State Legislature to reevaluate weapons laws in the state.

In response to these local violent incidents, representatives from 11 denominations of Salt Lake's religious community met April 24 to draft a resolution regarding firearms and their concealment, purchase, and penalties for infractions. The resolution adopted calls for Governor Michael Leavitt to convene a special legislative session to deal with specific issues related to weapons.

The religious leaders asked that legislators repeal the statute requiring churches to notify people that guns are not welcome there. Their resolution also calls for the designation of a place or places where instruments of violence may be deposited by anyone, with subsequent destruction of the items.

"We understand that there is both hardware and software of violence," said Irish. "The hardware are the guns, but also other instruments of violence. The software could include violent computer games or videos."

And finally, the resolution is a call to action for the religious community to work together on other issues impacting our society as we approach the next millennium.

Congregations in the Diocese of Utah have been asked to present the resolution to their members, offering these congregants the opportunity to support the resolution by signing it as well. They then would pass the signed resolution on to the office of the governor.

Churches are not alone in the paradox of laws in the state. For instance, in Utah it is currently legal to carry a concealed weapon onto school grounds. Some have even advocated the arming of a number of teachers in schools in Utah in order to protect the schools from violence.

Vigil honors victims

On April 29, the religious community organized a vigil on the steps of the State Capitol. With music, prayer and reflection, victims of violence, both gun violence and other kinds, were remembered. During the vigil, which was attended by more than 200, all those who spoke were under the age of 21. Reflections included those of a person who had witnessed shootings in a school last year and others who felt unsafe in schools as a result of the recent shootings.

One woman who attended the vigil carried a picture of her teenaged daughter, killed last fall in a drive-by shooting by someone who thought, mistakenly, that she was a gang member.

Although some people have said the current concern about gun laws is a knee-jerk reaction, Irish pointed out that "we have been concerned with issues of spouse abuse for several years. This is just one more example of the growing threat of violence in our society."

"We are not naïve in Utah," said Irish. "We are aware that strengthening gun control laws, even if all changes that anyone wants are implemented, will not in itself change the trend in violence in our society."

Other areas that need attention in society, she said, include family life, safety in the schools, issues of violence and the media, and renewed commitment to honoring the essential value of every person.

--The Rev. Dr. Jeff Sells is editor of *The Diocesan Dialogue*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Utah.

99-081

California Forum explores issue of blessing same-sex unions

by Stephanie Green

(ENS) Advocates who favor the church's move to bless same-sex unions met for a two-day forum in April at Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP), addressing the most difficult obstacles they face in dealing with a highly controversial issue.

The forum, "Should the Church Bless Same-Sex Unions?" was sponsored by the Center for Anglican Life and Learning and CDSP, was facilitated by the Rev. Edwin Bacon, rector of All Saints' Church in Pasadena, and the Rev. Kathleen van Sickle of Good Shepherd Church in Berkeley.

Bacon said that his participation in the forum was based, not just on a theology of justice alone, but on a theology and passion for vocation. He cited author Frederick Buechner's definition of vocation—where one's deep joy and the world's deep needs meet. "People and systems are most energized when they are in touch with their vocations and in tune with their call," he said. "To live a called life is to live an energized life; a non-called life is bland and energyless."

Admitting that he was raised to believe that gays and lesbians choose their orientation, Bacon said that an adult gay friend led him to a deep conviction that it was not a choice, that God intended some people to be gay. And he noticed that his gay colleague felt safe and free when he could "express his giftedness, skill and passion in an unbridled, creative form." Yet when he encountered judgment from family, colleagues and friends, he suppressed his creativity to protect himself.

Drawing on a similar experience over the issue of women's ordination, Bacon said that he felt drawn into a commitment to prepare people for inevitable change. So he began teaching about the holiness of homosexual love—and the need for the church to bless same-sex unions.

Release of Gospel power

When he was dean of the cathedral in Jackson, Mississippi, he was interviewed by All Saints' in Pasadena and asked if he would bless same-sex unions. He answered, "Absolutely." The issue became concrete when he was asked to bless a couple celebrating a 15-year relationship. During counseling he drew on questions he had always used before: Is there sacramental power in the relationship? Can one sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of their relationship? Shortly after he arrived, he did bless the relationship, calling it a "thrilling and energizing" experience.

Shortly after he moved to Pasadena, and in the wake of the attempted heresy trial of Bishop Walter Righter for ordaining a non-celibate gay man, Bacon convened the first "Beyond Inclusion" conference as a celebration of gay and lesbian presence in the church.

Bacon is convinced that a Gospel power is released in parishes where gays and lesbians are free to be out—and to be blessed by the community. "The church knows something about God's radically inclusive love: the Eucharist turns people's lives around and it, too, is experienced as a Gospel moment."

He concluded by stressing that the kingdom of God is a reign of justice and about being aligned with God's love. If the world were left to its own designs, he argued, it would never make itself just, non-violent and inclusive. Therefore the Body of Christ has a special responsibility to push the world to be just, peaceful and inclusive, even if that means that "individual churches must engage in ecclesial disobedience in order to bring the national church into the arena where it may lead the world in justice, particularly on this issue."

Van Sickle's ceremony

When she was a senior at CDSP Van Sickle did not know that she was a lesbian. Several years later, when she and her partner moved to the Bay Area where she worked as a liturgical deacon at Good Shepherd in Berkeley, she was drawn into the issue blessing same-sex unions.

Members of the parish met with the bishop to discuss the issue, prepared to argue the case in favor. They were surprised when the bishop suggested that, as a pilot project, the congregation put together a liturgy for blessing a couple in the congregation, perform that ceremony and report back to him.

The challenge led the congregation into a discussion about who it was and what it was celebrating—a life-giving relationship. The whole congregation participated in scriptural

study, accompanied by a theological exploration of baptism and other issues that defined them as a community.

During a search for a couple that was open to a ceremony, it dawned on Van Sickle and her partner that they might be the right candidates. Even though they had decided to wait until the church had resolved the issue, they realized that the church moves at "glacial speed" and sometimes needs a nudge.

Elizabeth Smith, a doctoral student in liturgy at CDSP, wrote a service and, even though Van Sickle and her partner Barbara describe themselves as private people, Van Sickle acknowledged that the blessing ceremony was "the most fabulous event in my life—an incredible experience because of the love of the community gathered."

The ceremony was a transforming experience for her family, especially for her mother who "could now know that the church loves me and that it is okay to be with Barbara."

Issues emerge from groups

Concerns emerged from eight small groups, addressing some of the most difficult barriers to the church's blessing of same-sex relationships.

Many people, for example, expressed concern over how to address through pastoral care and dialogue those in the church who have no tolerance for homosexuality and those who disagree strongly with the blessing of same-sex unions. Some wondered if the church might be permanently divided over the issue. Others wondered how to maintain unity with the rest of the Anglican Communion.

Bacon stressed that the current conflict should be regarded as a teaching moment through which the church can look at its biblical interpretation, theology, liturgy, community involvement and sacramental life. He noted that experience is the greatest teacher and that, without it, there is no vision.

"Every story of change in the church came from the battering ram of justice," he said. "Justice has to be pushed and confronted and people need to be willing to risk themselves. Education needs to be directed to everyone—even the bishops. The bishops are not the church, however; this was the mistake of Lambeth."

Many participants shared concerns about the kind of liturgy that might be used to bless same-sex unions, arguing that it should not mimic heterosexual marriage rites but be adapted to the needs and realities of individual relationships. Bacon said that he follows the structure for marriage from the Book of Common Prayer but gives couples the freedom to choose their own language.

"I am concerned that the blessing of a union will not carry with it the sacramental statement into the world that marriage carries," said one person. "I believe within the couple a sacramental quality might be present but how can they proclaim and share that sacrament in the world?"

Support from community

In addressing some of the civil implications, some wondered what "weight" the blessings would carry. Since marriage is the place where church and state meet, another person asked how the church could "lead the way for secular and legal institutions to make room for same-sex unions." John Kater, who teaches ethics at CDSP, recommended separating civil and religious ceremonies, as is done in most of the world. "Let the civil society get on with the civil act, let the church bless people," he said.

Broad concern was expressed about how the church community could best support a gay or lesbian couple before, during and after a blessing. And some questioned the process of

counseling before the ceremony. Bacon said that, in his experience, there wasn't much difference in the issues couples face.

One gay man underscored the importance of finding support within the church community for long-term relationships because, in the gay community, those relationships are more the exception than the rule. Bacon reminded participants that the community did the blessing.

The church's difficulty in dealing with sexuality stems largely from its inability to deal with the unity of the body and the spirit, making it almost impossible to accept homosexuality as something intended by God.

--Stephanie Green is a student at CDSP and assists in the office of the Center for Anglican Life and Learning.

99-082

Salvadoran rescued from deportation returns to joyous wedding in North Carolina

by E. T. Malone Jr.

(ENS) There was the usual last-minute anxiety before the wedding began. Somebody whispered that the bride was having trouble with a button. The four o'clock starting time passed, as the organist glanced from time to time toward the rear of the church, pulled out more sheet music, and kept on playing.

People shifted in their pews. Wedding congregations—filled with guests who are often unfamiliar with Episcopal liturgy—are always more varied than those who attend regular services, but this congregation was an absolute hodge-podge. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, black and white, Anglos and Hispanics, the poor and the wealthy, the educated and the uneducated, the powerful and the powerless—all had gathered on May 15 at the Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to witness a wonderful event: the marriage of Daisy Diaz and Jose Federico Campos, her childhood sweetheart and father of her five children.

When the procession finally began, and the beaming bride appeared with flowers in her hair, there was more than the usual sigh of relief.

More than just a wedding, as joyful as that can be in itself, this was the outward and visible sign of an energetic community project that had reached a happy and successful conclusion.

Languishing "in exile"

For until little more than a month earlier Campos, a resident of Chapel Hill since 1987, had languished "in exile" in El Salvador where he was deported in October 1998 after being arrested when he showed up in Charlotte for what he thought would be a hearing on his permanent residency in the U.S.

Instead, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officials pulled out an 11-year-old deportation order that had been issued when Campos, on the advice of a private immigration counselor, had failed to show up for a deportation hearing in 1988 in federal immigration court in Atlanta.

Campos and Diaz had fallen in love when he was a 17-year-old high school student and she was a 14-year-old in middle school. Fleeing the civil war in El Salvador, Campos

crossed illegally into Texas and lived with his older brother Carlos. Three years later he applied for political asylum, but was denied. Told he could be sent home, he didn't attend the 1988 hearing.

When Diaz turned 17, Campos persuaded her to join him in the United States, which she was able to enter legally. Here, they began to build a life and work toward becoming American citizens. They had five children, all American citizens, the most recent of whom were twin daughters born only nine months before Campos' deportation. But they were unable to marry because the change in status would have voided his residency application.

Campos became a carpenter and construction company supervisor in Chapel Hill and Diaz worked as a certified nursing assistant. Their three sons—Hugo, Jorge, and Alonzo—attend Seawell Elementary School and play in local soccer leagues. The oldest son, Hugo, suffers from a genetic disorder called neurofibromatosis, which can cause tumors and seizures. He must take expensive medication and every three months receive magnetic resonance imaging scans at the University of North Carolina Hospital. Health insurance at Campos' job covered part of the cost of Hugo's treatment.

Still, the INS would not consider hardship to children in reversing the deportation order, explained Molly McConnell, a Chapel of the Cross parishioner who became an indefatigable volunteer case worker for the family. "Molly almost burned up the church fax machine campaigning," said her rector, the Rev. Stephen Elkins-Williams, who preached the homily for the wedding.

She acted as coordinator for the task of finding effective legal representation for Campos and for organizing all the documents needed to apply for a waiver of deportation.

A community's support

Diaz, alone with the five children, received community support ranging from volunteer child care to cash donations for medical costs and legal fees. Jeff Weinstock, a Seawell School parent and chair of the school governance committee, acted as almost a surrogate father for the boys, taking them out for pizza or for soccer games.

The breakthrough came when it was discovered that Campos might be returned to the U.S. if it could be proved that his absence was a hardship to his mother, who by now was also living in North Carolina. "Well, this was no problem," said McConnell. Documentation was soon on its way and the visa officer at the U.S. embassy in El Salvador expedited a visa for Campos.

He stepped off the plane at the Raleigh-Durham Airport with nothing but the clothes on his back and the all-important green card, making him a permanent resident of the United States.

His sons cut the yellow ribbons that had been tied around the school marquee six months ago, and the entire school community staged a huge welcome-home celebration on Apr. 16, the day after Campos' return to the United States. Staff and parents there had rallied to help the family after his deportation. Food and banners filled the courtyard and portable stereos played "I'm Walking on Sunshine," "Celebrate," and "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

Immediately, Campos and Diaz wanted to schedule the wedding, and began talks with the Rev. Timothy Kimbrough, rector of Church of the Holy Family in Chapel Hill, where the boys had attended an afterschool program and begun attending Sunday school. They plan to have their children baptized there in November. The wedding service was held at Chapel of the Cross to accommodate a larger crowd.

“Joyous and unique”

“What a joyous and unique occasion,” said Elkins-Williams in his homily. “In celebrating weddings for seventeen years here, I do not remember one like this—from whatever way you want to look at it!... We give God great thanks that we have seen this day and for the privilege of participating in this joyful union.”

Kimbrough as celebrant read much of the ceremony in Spanish, and Ted Vaden, a parishioner at Chapel of the Cross and editor of the *Chapel Hill News*, which had published a series of articles and editorials on the case, read one of the lessons.

Their children joined Campos and Diaz at the altar for the final prayers. Alonzo brought the ring. Jorge served as his father's best man, and Hugo gave his mother away. The twins, Vannessa and Valeria, watched most of the ceremony from a front pew.

Still, everything is not settled. Recently, a new problem cropped up when the INS appealed a judge's ruling that Diaz herself be granted permanent residency—raising the spectre of the mother of this family now possibly being deported. McConnell supervised the distribution of pre-printed postcards at the wedding addressed to INS officials, asking them to withdraw the appeal.

The next day she was on the telephone, methodically going down the list of people who had signed the guest register. “Hello, I'm sure you simply overlooked it, but you forgot to sign one of the postcards yesterday. Now, why don't you just....”

--The Rev. Canon E. T. Malone Jr. is canon for publications and records for the Diocese of North Carolina.

99-071

Update from the Presiding Bishop on the ongoing crisis in Kosovo

I write to the Church today to provide an update on the multiple efforts undertaken at our Church Center and our whole Church in the midst of the tragedy that unfolds daily in Kosovo. Yesterday I sent two letters, one to President Clinton and the other to Dr. Han Wenzao of the China Christian Council, both on the subject of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

We are now searching with our Anglican and ecumenical partners for any creative means of supporting diplomatic efforts to end this tragedy. Much of this work necessarily goes unreported, but the efforts have been unflagging. While recognizing the difficulty in finding solutions, we are pursuing any avenue of peacemaking open to us.

Since last speaking on this crisis, the bombing has intensified and thousands more have fled to safety in Macedonia and Albania. Some modest gestures toward peace have been made, but the anguish and suffering for both refugees and the people of Kosovo continue. However, from this tragedy has come an incredible response from the whole Church.

The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief has received a heartening outpouring of support which has already made possible over \$120,000 of humanitarian relief to Kosovo refugees. The Fund with its ecumenical partners is bringing relief to the thousands who now search for safety in neighboring Balkan countries. Donors to the Fund should know that their contributions will help those refugees now coming to the United States to rebuild their lives.

The Fund also looks forward to assisting with rehabilitation in Kosovo should those so brutally dislodged from their homes and communities be able eventually to return home. The needs are great and I count on your continuing generosity so that the Episcopal Church can be an instrument of both relief and recovery for our sisters and brothers from Kosovo.

Further, Episcopal Migration Ministries through its network of diocesan resettlement programs will share in the resettlement of 20,000 refugees coming to the United States. In helping these refugees begin their lives anew, Episcopal Migration Ministries will connect these refugees with churches and other sponsors who will help with the healing that these new neighbors so urgently need. This effort will be sustained by the extraordinary generosity of parishes and Episcopalians around the country whose offers of assistance and friendship are received daily by the Church Center.

Surely, this is the Church at its best, seeking to serve Christ in all persons--even those of another faith from another land. Let us rejoice in this manifestation of our Church as a true source of resurrection for so many.

I also want you to know that I have assigned a team of staff to explore every option we might take in supporting an end to the conflict. Working in concert are staff from Anglican Relations, Migration Ministries, Peace and Justice Ministries (including the Church's Office of Government Relations), Ecumenical Relations, the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, and Media Services.

I again ask that we join in prayer with our sisters and brothers of all faiths in bringing healing out of the devastation that assaults us daily as we watch the evening news and read the daily press. I pray we will not enter the next millennium with the legacy of this tragedy hanging over us.

Yours sincerely,
The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop and Primate
May 14, 1999